

Titus 2 Conference Opens Hearts of Godly Women

by Daniel Borchers
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The first Titus 2 Conference, with about 400 participants, was sponsored by the Calvert Christian Group International and held at the Riverdale Baptist Church on June 27, 1998.

**“The hand that rocks the cradle
rules the world.”**

In an increasingly dangerous and evil
world
the cradle-rockers are ever more
important.

Who will *rock* the cradle?
How will the children *become* “grown up.”
Where do godly women *fit* in?

How, in a society with increasingly fractured
relationships, do we *develop* good
relationships?

The Titus 2 series of conferences
is an excellent place to start.

As one of the few men present at the inaugural Titus 2 Conference at the Riverdale Baptist Church in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, I was inspired by this conference conducted *by* godly women *for* godly women. Principles of behavior and of relationship-building are important irrespective of one's gender. Though geared towards the fairer sex, these principles are equally applicable for the other half of humanity. Certainly it would behoove men to gain a greater understanding of women and a greater appreciation for male-female roles and responsibilities.

Titus & Proverbs

Robin Henshaw, the conference director, was most gracious in arranging for my wife and I to attend the conference and in answering my questions. Robin is also the lead singer of **4:10**, the gospel trio which provided the upbeat and inspirational music throughout the day's events.



When asked what a Titus 2 woman *is*, Robin Henshaw explained:

“I think a Titus 2 woman is one who puts God first in her life and who *allows* others to influence her in the development of that personality or of that character. We look toward women as a sisterhood to allow each other to teach and edify and lift up those qualities which will best exemplify Jesus Christ since He resides in our hearts and in our lives. So I think that the purpose of the Titus 2 woman is one who is open to instruction, who is humble before her Lord and God, and who seeks with all of her heart to *live* His edicts, to live *His* path, and to walk in the way of righteousness.”

But how does the Titus 2 woman *correlate* with the Proverbs 31 woman? From Robin’s perspective:

“The Proverbs 31 woman is certainly going to be the *product* of the *process* that appears in Titus 2. Our Titus 2 woman is one who is in process, who’s developing. Hopefully that Proverbs 31 woman will be the *product* – that woman who is to be *exemplified* as truly *God’s* woman.”

Having been personally enriched by this one-day conference, I asked Robin “What was the most important thing you got *out* of the Titus 2 Conference?” She replied:

“The *building* of strong relationships with other women. Coming together enjoying the *company* of others. Janet Parshall puts it so nicely. She says, “snuggling down” – to snuggle down with other women. ... women certainly have burdens and concerns on their hearts and needs that only other women and *relational* activities can meet, can bring to focus. I think that just having the opportunity to see women minister *to*, to see dynamic women *ministering*, to allow that back-and-forth watching women within our congregation *hold* each other, and *speak* to each other, and *need* each other, and *enjoy* each other. ... it brought such *joy* to my *heart* that I was able to be a part of that and that this was happening because of a dream that I had because of a vision that I put down as a mission statement.”

God is certainly a God of relationships, desiring that each of us perfect our relationships with Him and with each other. Those who were in attendance at Titus 2 surely have been given the spiritual guidance to develop rich and long-lasting relationships with those men and women God brings into their lives.

Beverly Lowry



The first speaker, Beverly Lowry, is a wife of 45 years with three children, who began her present teaching career by entering a university at the age of 46. Beverly’s topic was “Christian Women in Today’s World.” Lowry noted that “the home is a *choice*.”

One of the primary factors for the myriad social problems in America today is the absence of fathers and husbands in family structures and the presence of mothers in the workforce. As Lowry points out, Satan has done a marvelous job of obscuring the proper roles of men and women in our families and our society.

Beverly notes what should be obvious to all, yet is habitually ignored: men and women are *different*. Men are masculine and have strength (Matthew 20:26-28.) Women are feminine and have beauty. The biblical definition of feminine beauty is found in 1st Peter 3:3-5 and is defined as inner, godly character. Women are the kinskeepers; they keep the family together. Women are the keepers of the home (Titus 2:5).

Tragically, in our culture today this definition of beauty as character and this kinskeeping role for women have been carefully concealed from our collective conscience by our adversary, the devil.

Has *God*, in His expectations for women, changed because *society* has changed? Does entering a new millennium change the roles for men and women which were designed at creation? For Lowry, the clear answer is “No.”

God is the one who decides who is male and who is female at conception. “All males are *masculine* at conception. All females are *feminine* at conception,” said Lowry. Lest we leave out the unborn, “*Motherhood* begins at conception.” It is through the nurturing role of women that children become whole and wholesome adults. Women give courage to their children and keep the family together.

We have a history of being deceived by Satan. The prevalent myth today is that women have been deceived by *men*. This myth is propagated by the feminist movement, which Lowry calls “a strategy of Satan.”

The truth, says Lowry, is that our enslavement began at the fall through sin. The root problem is sin, which can be changed in Christ. Men are not the enemy; *Satan* is. *Sin* is the root problem. Women became *enslaved* in the garden of Eden. “Our enslavement is not *political* but *spiritual*,” says Lowry. “*Satan* is our enemy.”

Genesis 3:16-19 records the enslavement of *mankind* as a consequence of *sin*. The *woman’s* curse is childbearing and being emotionally tied to her children. The *man’s* curse is work. These are *physical* and *psychological* curses. Today women are told they must bring money into the family. As women leave the wife and mother roles for work roles, they do not find freedom but, rather, take unto themselves the curse of man.

What is *liberty*? John 8:31-32 reveals the answer. Truth is not *knowledge* but the *person* of Jesus Christ. “Our freedom comes from a life yielded to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.” Our **identity** is in *Jesus Christ*.

Lowry gave pointers on how to have *true* liberation. 1) Recognize and yield to the Lordship of Christ. 2) Turn your roles into living for Christ. 3) Each woman must follow Christ in her own life. If God is governing your life He will show you what is right in your life. 4) Change your focus from behavior to motives. 5) Have a Christian set of values and principles.

Lowry concluded with a challenge to those mothers and prospective mothers in the audience: Make a commitment of a minimum of six years for each child to stay at home as a full-time mother. She said that we must rebuke Satan and get mothers back into the home.

Dr. Brenda Hunter



In her speech, “Starving for Relationships,” Dr. Brenda Hunter, addressed *mentoring* and *inner healing*. She noted that Titus 2 deals with an older woman who has scaled the mountain and is advising the younger woman who is about to climb.

Brenda used the story of Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:16-17; 4:14-15) as an example of mentoring. In a crisis we should run to God, seek support from a network of family and friends, and from mentors who have experienced similar situations.

Hunter provided a few tips for mentoring: 1) Don't wait for the phone to ring. Make a list of mentors and contact them. 2) Put into practice the principle of parallel streams. For every person you mentor have a mentor yourself. 3) Practice random acts of kindness. 4) Keep friendships rooted and grounded in the Lord. 5) Pray together. 6) Accept the women God brings into your life.

Hunter noted that "We have in this country a cross-generational disconnect." The Ruth-Naomi model of mentoring has been lacking for a variety of reasons with the consequence that many women feel lonely and isolated, vulnerable and hopeless.

The reasons cited for this cross-generational disconnect include: 1) Grandmothers who on a career path and don't have time. 2) Those of a certain age who say "It's *my* time now." 3) Those exhausted by caring for an extended family. The "sandwich generation" is one sandwiched between supporting their adult children's efforts to begin their lives and helping their own ailing parents.

However, the principal reason for this cultural disconnect is *unresolved mother-daughter problems*. A woman with an unhealthy relationship with her *own* mother is likely to have a similar relationship with *her* daughter. The sins of the mother are passed on to the daughters. A lot of older women have failed to resolve their relationships with their own mothers and are thus *incapable* of having healthy relationships with their daughters.

Hunter addressed the importance of these mother-daughter relationships. "Babies are born programmed to fall in love with their mothers." It is that mother-child bond of love which provides the tremendous opportunity for developing the whole person of the child. Indeed, the hand that rocks the cradle has an enormous impact upon the future of the child. "Our relationship with our mothers is key to all our other female relationships." If you have an emotionally secure relationship with your mother you will feel emotionally secure with other women. Mothers also teach daughters to "talk women's talk." We learn trust or mistrust from our mothers. To like your sex you have to like yourself. To love yourself you have to have been well nurtured by your mother.

Brenda also looked to the process of *inner healing* for those emotional and psychological wounds which result from inadequate or improper familial relationships. So often parent-child relationships are not what they should be and the consequences can be devastating for all of the parties involved. While mentoring can provide a *surrogate* relationship, it alone cannot heal the wounds and alleviate the parental void of the person involved.

This process of inner healing, spoken of by Dr. Hunter as "the journey to my heart," is critical for the achievement of *wholeness*. When we resist taking this journey we prevent the void in our hearts and souls from being filled. We hurt ourselves and everyone around us.

Dr. Hunter outlined the process of inner healing. In step 1 we are to see the relationship as it really *is* and not as we *want* it to be. We confront the reality of the situation so that we can deal with it. Step 2 involves "owning" any pain in the presence of an empathetic person. We must *deal* with what we are feeling rather than suppressing these unwanted emotions.

In the third step we bring everything to God. We take all our yearning to the Lord. In His presence we are free to confront all the bitterness, anger and longing for mother love and place those burdens on Jesus' shoulders. Step 4 is acceptance of reality by relinquishing the fantasy that our mother will meet our ideals.

Forgiveness is the final step. We forgive her for being the wounded mother she is (Matthew 18:18, Luke 17:3). *Forgiveness* is *freedom* from *your* pain and it opens the door for you to develop healthier

relationships with others. While it can be a difficult process, the benefits are enormous. Brenda advises, “Go into your soul and scrub your self.” This is how we become purified.

Barbara Williams Skinner



Barbara Skinner, the third speaker, addressed mentoring from another perspective. Mentoring involves *discipleship* (denying self) which involves surrendering your will to God. Mentoring is about *being there*.

Disputing Lowry’s claim that feminism is a “strategy of Satan,” Skinner does agree there are problems with the feminist movement. She notes that feminism in the 70s was *other*-oriented but in the 90s it is *me*-oriented. A second problem Barbara noted is that feminism offers a *skills*-approach to mentoring which neglects *character* development and personal *relationships* – the very things lacking in our culture today.

However, Skinner’s principle theme was mentoring and she offered a program towards that end: *Love that Offers Value and Encouragement*. This four-point program provides a practical approach to mentoring and is designed to offset a root cause of contemporary societal problems: the lack of love. “Children today are suffering from a lack of nurturing.” This is the cause of disrespect and violence today. “We don’t know *how* to love because we don’t *feel* loved.”

Love. “Mentoring, like discipleship, is an act of selfless love.”

Offers. “Mentoring happens, when out of God’s command of love and service, one woman offers her personal and professional support and ‘know-how’ to counsel and guide another woman needing or seeking support.”

Value. “Mentoring occurs when one woman values the life of another woman, despite her racial, cultural, social class or denomination.”

Encouragement. “Christ-centered women realize that many of God’s women have been wounded and are in great need of healing.”

Skinner ties mentoring to our Christian walk and to preaching the gospel. Mentoring is helping others to walk into the holiness with which we’ve been called. She connects the dual dynamic of personal *holiness* and regeneration with that of the broader society and *mentoring*.

All too often neglected, Skinner promotes the *duality* of salvation, and of healing. Salvation is both *individual* (personal) and *collective* (body of Christ). Healing – including the “journey to my heart” Hunter spoke of – is also *individual* (personal) and *collective* (national). As each of us participates in our *own* individual salvation, our *own* spiritual growth, and the journey of our *own* hearts, we also participate in (or *should* participate in) the salvation and spiritual growth of the *corporate* entity (the body of Christ, the nation as a whole). We must see ourselves as *part* of the *whole*.

Our commission as Christians is expressed in Matthew 28:18-20. This refers to *personal* salvation and *evangelism* (looking to others) and eventually encompasses all of creation. This is *discipleship*. Skinner suggests that as we live our daily lives we ask ourselves in everything we do, “Is what I’m doing or about to do leading to kingdom-building?” We all need to *live* (model) as well as *talk* the gospel. We need to focus on our *own* holiness as well as the condition of the broader *society*. Unfortunately, people think of Christianity as just another social club. That myopic view of Christianity can only be changed by the transformed lives of Christians transforming society.

Skinner concludes on a positive note, observing that we are all victorious in Christ. “We have the power to change the *nation*. We have the power to change the *world*.”

Janet Parshall



The final speaker, Janet Parshall, spoke of God’s love and faithfulness, how His love and faithfulness offer hope to mankind, and how the lives of Christians are transformed in the process.

Echoing previous speakers, Janet observed the dual dynamic of Christianity: “There is the ‘*inside the tent*’ experience and the ‘*outside the tent*’ experience.”

We who are alive are clothed in “this costume called flesh,” and the Christian experience of spiritual growth in our walk with God is the “inside the tent” experience. The “outside the tent” experience is exhibiting Christian love and the fruit of the Spirit – touching the lives of others in our communities, our churches, our businesses, our government – in short, *wherever* we are.

Janet told several moving stories which reveal the depth of God’s love for us, His faithfulness to us, and our response to Him.

In Genesis chapter 22, Abraham willingly offers his only son as a sacrifice to God. Verse 2 is the first use of the word “love” in Scripture. Isaac was his “only son,” a unique and beloved son (typifying the only begotten Son which God would sacrifice). Janet noted that Scripture is silent concerning Abraham’s *emotional response* to God’s sacrificial instructions. But Abraham’s *actions* are recorded for us. Abraham got up and obeyed God’s commands.

Janet makes the important point that “We are *saved* individually and *respond* individually and ultimately we are *refined* individually.” A vital part of the process is *trusting*, as Abraham did, that God will *provide*.

Exodus chapters 1 and 2 record the birth and preservation of Moses as an infant. Once again, the emotional response is absent, but we have a tender, touching and familiar story of a mother and the son she loved. Giving birth to a male child when Pharaoh’s edict demanded a partial-birth abortion be performed, she spared her son, hid him for three months, then cast him adrift in the Nile, trusting in the Lord. The Pharaoh’s daughter quickly rescued Moses and raised her as her own, actually paying the mother to nurse and care for him. We must never forget “God’s provision, protection and peace.”

In her stories Parshall revealed God’s love and faithfulness. She also pointed out how He miraculously intervenes in the lives of His people, often in very unexpected ways. “We have an awesome God who can knead the soil of the human heart.”

Janet explained the cinematic phenomenon of the blockbuster movie *Titanic*, noting that it has such a cultural resonance because people want to know the answer to this question: “If you knew that death was imminent how would you handle it?” People also want to know if there is an afterlife and a God. The real-life story of John Harper, one of the victims of the *Titanic*’s demise, is an astonishing one.

As the Titanic was sinking, Harper gave his lifejacket to another person. He spent his last hours of life looking to the spiritual lives of others, asking everyone he met if they'd been saved, if they knew Jesus. Even as he was dying, going under the frigid waters of the North Atlantic one last time, he called out to a man afloat on a piece of driftwood, asking, "Have you been saved?" That man was Harper's last convert, one who would eventually begin his own ministry. Harper himself is honored in Glasgow, Scotland. Harper's daughter survived the sinking and continued her father's ministry.

Janet also drew from her own personal experiences. Last October her 19-year-old son, Sam, was accidentally shot in the head. The bullet went in one ear, ricocheted through his skull and came out the back of his head. The prognosis was that he would never walk, would be deaf in one ear, and might have impaired cognitive skills. When the bandages were removed, God's miraculous intervention was evident. There was no damage to the ear and none of the dire predictions were realized. The prayers of Janet, her family, friends and other prayer partners were answered.

"This is not a *religion*," declared Parshall. "It is a *relationship* with a living King."

Janet concluded the conference with another story, an inspirational sea tale both tragic and touching.

Horatio Stafford lost all four of his daughters when their ship sank in the North Atlantic Ocean. Stafford took the next ship across the Atlantic to be with his wife. The captain pointed out the spot where the ship sank and that night Stafford penned the words to the much-loved hymn, *It Is Well with My Soul*, displaying absolute faith in God's faithfulness and love.

May we all be able to emulate the apostle Paul who was content in all things, and, like Stafford, be able to say "It is well with my soul."

Titus 2

- Vs. 1 You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.
- Vs. 3 Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine.
- Vs. 4 Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children.
- Vs. 5 to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.
- Vs. 7 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.
- Vs. 11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.
- Vs. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,
- Vs. 13 while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,
- Vs. 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.
- Vs. 15 These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.